

END OF TOUR ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

MAJOR GENERAL SAMUEL N. WAKEFIELD

Commanding General, US Army Transportation Center

Fort Eustis, Virginia

This is the End-of-Tour Oral History of Major General Samuel N. Wakefield, Commanding General of the US Army Transportation Center, Fort Eustis, Virginia. The interview was conducted at Fort Eustis on January 6, 1992 by the Command Historian, Mr. James C. Shepard. General Wakefield assumed command 26 April 1988 and relinquished it 8 January 1992.

The interview was recorded on one cassette tape,

MR. SHEPARD: General Wakefield, please set the context of the interview by describing your prior assignment and your anticipated next assignment.

MG WAKEFIELD: Well, my assignment prior to coming here was the J4-DCSLOG of the United States Forces Command at Fort McPherson, Georgia. There, I was responsible for the logistics function of Forces Command. From here I am going to be the TRADOC Deputy Commanding General for Combined Arms Support as well as Commanding General of the Combined Arms Support Command, and Commander of Fort Lee, Virginia.

MR. SHEPARD: General, we all assume your proper preparation. But, on notification of this assignment, did you feel you could have been better prepared; was there some special assignment or preparation you would like to have done before assuming this tenure?

MG WAKEFIELD: No. I don't think so. I thought I was prepared. However, after having served in the position, I realized that probably the two most important jobs I had was being the J4 of Forces Command with its broad logistics responsibilities, and, Commander of the 29th Area Support Group in Kaiserslautern, Germany. I say that because the job at FORSCOM gave me the perspective of dealing with the senior staff, and with subordinate DISCOM of the Division Commanders and Corps Commanders. This was much like dealing with fellow commandants and the TRADOC staff. It also included a lot of time in Washington working with the DA Staff at the General Officer level. The position at the 29th Area Support Group was a unique assignment for a Colonel because it had the largest independent budget in USAREUR other than a Corps budget. Some \$215 million dollars with a full resource management staff. In addition, I had responsibility for the Army community within the Kaiserslautern area. So I had to understand Base Operations, Quality of Life issues, and those types of things. Probably those two jobs in the last 10 years were the most significant ones in preparing for this one.

I think someone that comes into this type of job today and does not understand resource management and allocation of austere resources, will have a lot of quick learning to do.

MR. SHEPARD: Later on in the interview, we might review that as one of those tough problems facing your successor. Sometimes, in selecting officers for your position, there is someone who does the selection, and then gives specific guidance. Who selected you to command the Transportation Center, and what specific guidance did you receive?

MG WAKEFIELD: Well, the General Officer Management Office, in conjunction with various people they chose to talk with made recommendations to the Chief of Staff. I don't know all the mechanisms they went through in my particular case. I do know that General [LTG Jimmy D.] Ross, then DCSLOG of the Army, and General [LTG William G.T.] Tuttle [Jr.], then commander of the LOG Center, which is now CASCOM, were instrumental in recommending to General [Maxwell R.] Thurman, the TRADOC Commander, that I have this position; but, with a lot of discussion that I did not get personally involved with. That was what occurred and I suppose the specific guidance I got was from both General Thurman and General Tuttle. They essentially said, Rule 14: "When you're in charge, take charge. You are the Commandant and Chief of Army Transportation and we expect you to analyze the state of the Corps, to understand what is happening in the Army, and to start shaping the Transportation Corps for the Airland Battle operations of the future." They gave me great latitude in that.

I received no specific, direct, guidance from either one of them, other than for those things the TRADOC commander gave concerning his vision of TRADOC and the domains of TRADOC: Doctrine, Organization, Training, Leader Development, Materiel Modernization, and Quality of Life. Under those major umbrellas, we chose the actions to accomplish. The guidance was that I understand the role of TRADOC as the architect of the future in preparing the Army for war, and, to take the Transportation Corps, in harness with the rest of TRADOC, to get it done.

MR. SHEPARD: It was broad focusing on something that guidance then, as opposed to the someone assumed needed fixing?

MG WAKEFIELD: Yes it was. It was broad, very broad objective guidance, within the context of the TRADOC mission.

MR. SHEPARD: Do you subscribe to a philosophy of leadership? Do you feel you've developed one you can describe in terms of the broad management perspective you have here at the Center?

MG WAKEFIELD: Well, I think that at the General officer level, you give guidance for the direction of the organization, and assure that the other principles are followed. The five principles of management, and, our leadership principles, have always served me well: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling. That type of thing; and

know your people, know your job, and know yourself. I think that has sort of been the way I have conducted things. Take five or six of the high priority items, work on them with individuals, or with a task force; give broad guidance to colonels and let them use their own initiative and resources to get the job done. It has always been basic, if you let people at each level of responsibility have the authority and the resources to get things done, then they do a lot better job without micro-management.

MR. SHEPARD: General Wakefield, in looking over your job description it becomes apparent you wear about four hats: School Commandant, Chief of Transportation, Commander of the Corps Regiment, and Commanding General of the installation. I would like to take each of those separately for a moment or two, and focus on major problems and major accomplishments in each of those areas. First, your role as the Commandant of the School.

MG WAKEFIELD: Well, I think the role as Commandant of the School, besides what was said a few minutes ago, is to ensure the TRADOC mission is looked at in its several domains. In the domain of Doctrine, I would say that a major accomplishment, and one of the things General Tuttle and I discussed when I first came here, was the issue of Movement Control. That doctrine was fairly sound but a lot of people didn't understand it. It had been a long time since we had a new Field Manual on Movement Control. So we made a concerted effort to get it done. When I first said I wanted it published in a year, that was in the spring of 1988, I was told it would be at least two years, and maybe three. Here it is almost four and the document is just now in camera ready form for printing. So it takes an awfully long time even with a concerted effort. The rest of the doctrine was in good order. The Transportation Corps, I think, had lost its bearing on its role and mission as far as Movement Control-Movement Management. We've been teaching many people mode operations, in a generic way, without a great appreciation for Movement Control. After we got that going, we reorganized the Advanced Course and made sure there were sufficient hours in that course to give all Transportation officers a very healthy dose of Movement Control and Movement Management. In the domain of training, I think we made sure the Non-commissioned Officer Academy, and its Leader Development, was in sync and was certified according to the standards. It took a lot of effort to do that, changing to Small Group Instruction mode and so forth. Driver's training in the Army was broken, still broken, I think. To work on it, we established the Army Driver Standardization Office. We did a lot of work with the Federal Highway Administration and the Commercial Driver's Licensing Program. I think Driver Training is now well on its way to being fixed, but still needs some work. Organizationally, we had known for quite some time that we needed HET [Heavy Equipment Transporter] companies that were organized for both operational and strategical levels of war. Desert Shield and Desert Storm were great manifestations of the problem. So, I think the greatest organizational change in the Transportation Corps was in reorganizing HET units into 96 HETs in a company. That was a quick action. Normally, it takes a couple of years to do that. We were able to do it in less than 6 months. In Materiel Development, the Commandant's role was through Combat Developments. The watercraft development was on track, but, we had to complete a Wheeled Vehicle Modernization study that was high on the agenda of Generals

Thurman and Tuttle. We got that finished in conjunction with DA-DCSOPS and it set the azimuth and pattern for the light, medium, and heavy wheeled vehicle modernization plans. We have, as user representative, contributed to getting all these programs funded. So, all the testing, modernization, and materiel development, has progressed pretty well.

The fielding of the LCU 2000's; the new side loading warping tug; the new causeway; and maintenance of the McHenry Heavy Lift ship for training--all those things I think have worked out pretty well.

In Leader Development, we spent a lot of time getting the Non-commissioned Officer's Academy certified and getting the Small Group Instruction mode off the ground. That was painful and a lot of people didn't want to do it. There were a lot of resources tied up in it, but that has been accomplished. I would address Quality of Life under the hat of the installation commander.

MR. SHEPARD: In the domain of Doctrine, I keep seeing similar, but slightly different terms, and I wondered if they all relate to the same thing. I see "Combat Distribution System," "Battlefield Distribution System," and "Total Distribution System." Are we talking about the same thing evolving, or, three essentially different systems?

MG WAKEFIELD: No. I think they are essentially the same thing evolving. It deals with how to get supplies from the factory to the foxhole in an efficient and effective way. Movement Control-Movement Management i-s a key piece of that because that's where we get the "in-transit visibility;" the capability of having asset visibility while supplies are being moved and materiel is being moved in the pipeline. That has a lot of tentacles to it as far as automation and communications and management of those processes. I think it's all one, sort of all one and the same.

MR. SHEPARD: The reason I brought it up is that I had seen it addressed differently in different places. I can see based on what you've said, is that probably the one term of "Combat Distribution System" is a subpart of the "Total Distribution System," or could very well be.

MG WAKEFIELD: I think the greatest failure of all of us over the last 20 years is the inability to field a robust STAMIS [Standard Army Management Information System] called Department of the Army Movement Management System. That has been the most frustrating effort to get done. We spent a lot of money, lot of resources, and a lot of time on it. There is a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel, but there is still a long way to go in the distribution system area. It is a complicated issue. It takes a lot of technology and movement of large volumes of data, and very sophisticated communications. But we have not done well in that area. We wi11 continue to work on that this next year or so.

MR. SHEPARD: In early 1990 you issued instructions to reorganize the Transportation School. Could we go back for a moment and capture the logic and the things that caused you to come to that decision?

MG WAKEFIELD: Well, resources. In today's world, you are managing to Command Budgets. There's always manpower each year. There were efficiencies to be derived; such as eliminate layering of management levels, and that type thing. That was the reason it was done.

MR. SHEPARD: Could we move to your role as Transportation for just a few moments? How do you view the role of Branch Chief?

MG WAKEFIELD: Well, the branch chief is part of that whole notion of branch proponentcy, not just "The Chief of ..." Each one of the 16 branches is a powerful tool for Leader Development. It is a powerful tool for representing your particular branch as far as proponentcy of all these-of soldiers, warrant officers, officers, and civilians is concerned. Our Office of Chief of Transportation is a vigorous and viable office that understands accessions; how civilians, enlisted, warrants, and officers are accessed. And, we are vigorous in writing the criteria for Leader Development for all these folks that are in the different manuals. For example, the Officer Manual, DA PAM 600-3. The branch chiefs of the different branches participate with PERSCOM in professional development matters. So, it is a powerful position in the Army to manage change and to understand what is happening in a particular branch.

MR. SHEPARD: Were there achievements in the branch chief's role that were particularly satisfying? And any you wanted to have done better?

MG WAKEFIELD: The people in the Office of the Chief of Transportation, the action officers, the lieutenant colonel that manages that office, the officers, noncommissioned officers, and warrant officers are hand picked and they are very energetic. I don't know of anything we tried to do that we were not able to accomplish. I suspect the hardest thing was recoding positions for logisticians to 03A (Alpha), and to make sure that the accessions models of the PERSCOM were giving the Transportation Corps its fair share. That's still an ongoing action but I think we had the ability to set the agenda; we did a good job of that with those guys.

MR. SHEPARD: I believe so too. I deal with them almost daily and it's been universally a good crop of people. Moving next to the Transportation Corps Regiment--How did you look upon your role as commander of the regiment?

MG WAKEFIELD: There is a fine line, I think, for Combat Service Support branch chiefs, Combat Support branch chiefs, the chief of the service, and the Colonel of the Regiment. The Transportation Corps Regiment is really the branch. There are some days when you are talking with folks in the office of the Chief of Transportation about a branch issue and the next minute you are into a regimental issue. For example, it's in the Office of the Chief of Transportation that we develop the Regimental SOP. So an

action officer sometimes finds himself engaged in regimental issues which are almost synonymous with branch issues. I suppose "Regimental Colonel" is more ceremonial if you take a narrow view of it. But because the branch chief is wearing both hats, it is difficult to separate those issues. Of course, the biggest manifestation of the separation is when we have the Regimental Review and the Regimental Week with the Corps' birthday every July. The issues we get into deal with recognition of distinguished members of the regiment, the Regimental Colonel, the Honorary Regimental Colonel, and those types of things.

But I think the regimental system, perspective, from the branch perspective, is a very healthy phenomenon in the Army because it fosters camaraderie and gives you the capability to get to know the people you probably would not have known in the same light. So you really have your fingers into both the social aspects of the organization as well as its professional development.

MR. SHEPARD: In addition to cohesion, regimental week, and the things you mentioned, there are other regimental things such as coins, neckties, and scarves. Those are brought into play quite often. I don't know how to categorize them other than "regimental things." Are there other, similar initiatives on the horizon?

MG WAKEFIELD: It is identification, I think the Regimental System gives you an identification: to a group, with a group, that is also in the branch. But, as you say, the paraphernalia associated with the regiment all foster some of the camaraderie and cohesion we are looking for.

MR. SHEPARD: Maybe we can change gears now and look at the role of the Commanding General of the Center, and at Base Ops [Base Operations] for a few moments. What things were particularly difficult, and what things were accomplished that you would like to note?

MG WAKEFIELD: Well, we have always, ever since I've been in the Army, said we have hard decisions to make. You never have enough resources even when you have plentiful resources. There are always demands that consume whatever is in the bucket. But we really are now in austere funding times. Yet, there's a certain amount of dollars it takes to operate an organization. I call it the dollars it costs to turn on the lights and enter the door, and it doesn't matter whether there's one or 500 people there, it still costs. You still have to pay for electricity, the right water system, sewer system. All that infrastructure has costs associated with it, and we have traditionally just said, "Well, we have to take a cut. We'll take salami cuts and sort of suck it up." We are now to the point where we can't suck it up anymore. There is a base level of funding to keep organizations and different installations operational. I'm not sure there is complete agreement on that, if you went through the different headquarters up to the Department of the Army. There's always an indication "well, you have some sluff in there and you have some ways to get things done and out of \$70 million dollars, you can make that happen." Today, it takes \$74 million dollars to operate Fort Eustis with the number of people to keep it open at the minimum quality of life acceptable. Most of our budget is in

civilian salaries so there is not much discretion for management. There is very little discretionary funding there, particularly when you also address supplies and TDY. Yet, it has to be done. So, there is a bottom line: \$74 million dollars that has to be funded if we are going to keep Fort Eustis open with any semblance of the quality of life we expect for our soldiers today. I would say that as the Garrison Commander, or Installation Commander, I was fortunate in that the Chief of Staff was broadly based and understood resource management, really understood community operations and that type of thing. So Colonel [Dan G.] Shellabarger was instrumental in the things we did in that area. On reflection, I think one of the things not clear when I got here was the relationship of Fort Eustis to the Peninsula civilian community. Colonel Shellabarger represented the Post as a member of the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce but the CG was not heavily involved. It was very difficult to get to know the senior business and political leaders of the community. I think one of the things that causes that is when you move CG's frequently the local community people lose continuity. Because it is a different situation on the Peninsula, you can lose sight of that very quickly. So I would say that installation commanders, in austere times, should be on station at least three years in order to foster that relationship. When I came here, I was told I would be here 2 years. I ended up staying almost 4 years. I can see the difference, the significant difference, between knowing the mayors of the six communities, or the county commissioners and being able to go to community meetings and that type of thing, and being able to relate with them socially and professionally. You just don't do that very easily. That is not easy to get done, for if you lose continuity, you break the chain and it is hard to knit back together.

MR. SHEPARD: General Wakefield, during the latter part your tenure, one of the major events was our involvement in Desert Shield and Desert Storm. As commander of a mobilization station, also as a commander of some troops that deployed, you were heavily involved. What are your views of our operations, first as a mobilization station, and then, as a sustainer of those men and women we sent from the 7th Transportation Group?

MG WAKEFIELD: As a mobilization station, we had adequate mobilization planning. Our relationship with First Army was solid and the people in our DEP/SEC [Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security] were cognizant of things that had to be done. Quite frankly, the tempo of the mobilization at Fort Eustis, and the pace of the mobilization, was phased so that there was not a traumatic effect. There was a lot of work that had to be done, a lot of long hours, but there was no question, the way the 7th Group was phased out, that we had resources between the 7th Group and the 8th Brigade. Thus, we could couple together management structures, command and control, and management of the mobilization process without much difficulty. As time transpired and the tempo picked up, we found we were having more and more difficulty, and that's when we brought in the reserve command and control apparatus to help do the training. It was easier for us because, basically, we put transportation units through the process. When we brought in the hospital, it became apparent that our capability of managing the hospital folks was difficult. So I think that in the mobilization process if you get outside the functional area of your expertise, you need help through the Reserve

Groups and the Reserve Training Commands. In that regard, the 80th [Army Reserve] Division came through loud and strong. If you have a great number mobilizing, and you don't have the cadre here, and the tempo of mobilization is such, then you have to bring in Reserve Mobilization Teams. That is where we get the expertise for common tasks and skills and the kinds of talent to get deploying troops POR [Preparation for Overseas Replacement] qualified. You can handle it if it is a small flow. But if the flow increases, you have to bring in additional people if you are going to get it done right. That's what we had to do later on in the mobilization process.

MR. SHEPARD: Did we experience any particular problem in sustaining the 7th Group with personnel while they were deployed?

MG WAKEFIELD: Well, we did not for the 7th Group, but we had a very difficult time in the Transportation Corps for drivers. We had to train about 7,000 drivers very quickly, and some of those drivers we brought up from the inactive reserve, the IRR, and, we had to convert units, ADA [Air Defense Artillery] units to drivers out at Fort Lewis, Washington. So in that context, if you look at the 7th Group as a Transportation function in Saudi, drivers were the "long pole in the tent." But as far as the terminal service function of the 7th Group, there was no problem sustaining those soldiers. But, you have to keep in mind that in Saudi Arabia, we operated from one of the best ports in the world.

MR. SHEPARD: General, looking back over the almost four years, and considering all four hats, what was your greatest challenge in this position?

MG WAKEFIELD: Oh, I think by far the greatest challenge was to keep Fort Eustis operating on a very austere budget. We have 275 fewer people today than when I came here, all done, essentially, by attrition over the years.

MR. SHEPARD: I've heard you say many times there is a minimum number of people necessary to keep the functions going, and after that, you cut functions.

MG WAKEFIELD: Well, the Army never cuts functions. I mean, what functions do you want to cut? I admit we say, Well, we are going to cut a function," but I've never known of anyone to cut a function. The only function I know we cut at Fort Eustis is we do not monitor bad checks anymore. I mean, what are you going to cut? Safety? Are you going to cut the EEO, the Staff Judge Advocate? We have reorganized and reorganized. We reorganized the Post Staff; we reorganized the School staff. We have done all that. I mean, if you cut anymore, what happens? Something just doesn't get done as well. I don't know what functions you would cut. What the Army has to do is close some bases. We cannot continue to maintain sixteen or seventeen TRADOC installations and 22 FORSCOM installations and X number of AMC installations with an austere budget.

MR. SHEPARD: What was a typical day like sir?

MG WAKEFIELD: At Fort Eustis, the typical day was from about 7:45 to 8:00 to 11:30 to 12:00, and then I usually tried to do PT at the lunch hour. I tried to get out of the office around 5:30, sometimes 6:00. But my day was normally consumed meeting with people. My technique was, I would write notes on pieces of paper that I wanted to discuss, with "See Me" on them. Those were gathered together by the staff, and then we would have meetings to talk about maybe 15 to 20 different items that had accumulated over a week or two. There were a lot of discussions in the combat development arena. Basically, my calendar was filled with things like talking to action officers and to people that had the issues. I did not spend a lot of time in the office reading or writing things. I normally read my "In-box" at night, or while going around the post. While I am in the van going downtown, or traveling, I'll read my "In-box." I don't know, secretaries have a unique way of filling up your day. You have to continually make sure you are in charge of your calendar. Of course there is a great deal of traveling. Either you are traveling to Commandant meetings, or as part of your Chief of Transportation role, or you are involved in some type of Total Army issue. There were great demands on my time for both on-post and off the installation. We just had to pick and choose what we thought would be the most productive.

MR. SHEPARD: I noticed you spent a lot of time on the road. I would say a significant part of that dealt with Research & Development items. In that regard, just recently the LAMP-H [Lighter, Amphibian--Heavy Lift] watercraft program was terminated. It had been pretty well along toward fielding. What happened, what stopped it?

MG WAKEFIELD: Unaffordability. If you look to the probability of using that particular asset, in relationship to the urgent requirements of the funding process, to the Long Range Plan as well as the Procurement Plan, it was just something that could not meet the funding line. I did not make a "fall on my sword" issue of it because there are other ways to discharge ships in the stream, not as efficiently, not as fast, but you can get the job done. And, with the changing world status, I did not think we ought to spend money on a LAMP-H when there are other high priority things that need funding. And, there are opportunities to refit the LACV-30, like upgrading it to LACV-50.

MR. SHEPARD: I just wondered if service "Roles and Missions" got caught up in that, as opposed to the unlikelihood of future amphibious operations?

MG WAKEFIELD: No. The roles and missions is that the LAMP-H, the amphibian, the air cushion vehicle, becomes cost effective in operations if ships are stationed offshore more than a mile and three quarters to two miles. But, if closer to the shore, then there are causeway systems, LCU'S, and other lighterage available. That type stuff is slow moving in the water but you can at least get' supplies from the ship to the beach. Still, there is a, school of thought that says, "Well, if the beach gradient is shallow, you can't get some of those systems in." In an emergency, I could put some engineering effort out there and build a temporary causeway to solve some of those problems. So, there are some workarounds.

MR. SHEPARD: Looking toward your next assignment, which is still in the TRADOC chain, the next question deals with the present organizational structure; the School to the Center, to CASCOM, to TRADOC. How has that relationship worked? Is there anything you would have changed about it?

MG WAKEFIELD: I think there is an important role for the Integrating Centers, to make sure that the functions that, when doing the horizontal integration of functions, are done with efficiency in mind. I don't know how long you can continue to have the status quo. I think there will be reorganizations. I think Combat Developments will be reorganized. I think it is important that the schools maintain the capability to develop O & O, [Operational and organizational] concepts, that they do the basic Combat Developments work. The schools are the proponents and we should keep the people that are doing that type of development, as well as teaching, and writing doctrine. It should stay at the schools at the expense of, if necessary, the Integrating Centers. The higher headquarters has to have a lean and mean integrating capability, and we have to do a lot more matrix management than what we have been doing. There is going to be some reorganization, no question about it. I can't define it right now, but it has to happen.

MR. SHEPARD: When General Wykle arrives, what will be the greatest challenge facing him?

MG WAKEFIELD: The budget

MR. SHEPARD: It's that bad? It's going to hit him that hard?

MG WAKEFIELD: We are going to be out of money at Fort Eustis the 31st of July, if we don't get any more.

MR. SHEPARD: Does he know? I say that tongue-in-cheek because budget problems have been ongoing for a year and a half to two years.

MG WAKEFIELD: That's continual. It's the day to day business.

MR. SHEPARD: Sir, what didn't we cover that you would like to cover?

MG WAKEFIELD: I think we did about everything, Jim.

MR. SHEPARD: I thought there may be something on your mind that you would like to address. Is there anything you are unhappy with the progress in?

MG WAKEFIELD: The only thing I'm really unhappy with progress in is automation. I think we are too process oriented, we've too many people involved; we are not learning from industry sufficiently about how they do it. I acknowledge industry has problems too. But, by the time we go through a lot of our processes, the state of the art has moved away from us. It is just very difficult to give birth to automated systems. We have to do

better in that area, particularly in the ones that Transportation has been dealing with. Other than that, I think everything is in fairly decent shape.

MR. SHEPARD: Sir, the last item on your OER Support Form said, "Have fun doing all of the above." Did you have fun?

MG WAKEFIELD: I did. But, when I'm not having fun, I will quit and do something else. You have got to put everything in the right perspective.

MR. SHEPARD: General Wakefield, thank you for helping us capture your views about the Transportation Center and the Transportation Corps during your tenure as Commander. Good luck in the next command.

MG WAKEFIELD: Jim, it was my pleasure. I'm sorry we had to trip around the movers to get this done--but I think we got there all right.